

NEWS RELEASE



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District: 7--Los Angeles/Ventura

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



CALTRANS, CHP, and CITY OF LOS ANGELES FIGHT LITTER

LOS ANGELES – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Highway Patrol, and the City of Los Angeles partnered to launch the 2012 anti-litter campaign with a press conference to highlight the impacts of litter as part of Caltrans *Don't Trash California* and Keep California Beautiful's *Littering Is Wrong Too* campaign. Showcased were home furnishings, cigarette butts, license plates, grocery carts, futons, food wrappers and many other trash items – all found on the freeway.

Caltrans Storm Water's inspection robot "Scooter" was in attendance to showcase how trash can clog up freeway storm drains and contaminate water that ends up in rivers, lakes, and the ocean.

Every year Caltrans spends millions of dollars to fight litter and vandalism on Los Angeles freeways and highways.

"Litter wastes valuable taxable dollars and it puts motorists and our employees in danger's way daily," said Deputy District Director of Maintenance Dan Freeman. "When Caltrans sweepers, trucks, and maintenance workers have to clear litter from the freeway the chances for severe or fatal injuries increases for motorists and Caltrans employees."

In the last fiscal year District 7 spent \$1.8 million year picking up 23,655 cubic yards of litter and also spent \$1.8 million cleaning up 2.5 million square feet of graffiti.

Statewide, Caltrans spent over \$43 million to remove more than 150,000 cubic yards of litter, trash, and debris from our state highways. Enough litter to fill 9,560 garbage trucks. If each truck was lined up end-to-end it would stretch almost 50 miles. "Obviously, this is not the best use of valuable tax dollars and state resources that could go to projects to help maintain and improve our transportation system," said Freeman.

Through the Caltrans Adopt-a-Highway program businesses, organizations and individuals can take responsibility for keeping a two-mile stretch of road free from litter.

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Currently, in District 7 there are 229 active adoption groups in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties and more than 2,836 statewide and 13, 575 participants. They are making considerable inroads in roadside litter control and saving California taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

Caltrans also partners with adjacent cities to maximize clean-up efforts, and work with community groups such as schools, churches and charitable organizations.

"The City of Los Angeles, particularly the Department of Public Works, take issues of urban blight seriously. Graffiti, illegal dumping, and litter all contribute to a lower quality of life," said Director of the Office of Community Beautification Paul Racs. "Hopefully, Earthday will stick with people throughout the year, and remind them to keep our community streets and highways clean."

"We need all the help we can get. So please get the word out—trash and litter have no place on our freeways," said Freeman.

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